

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) An apparatus comprising:
a plurality of ports capable of being coupled to a plurality of devices via an associated plurality of communication links, the links being compliant with Serial Attached Small Computer Systems Interface (SAS) protocol; and
circuitry to provide selectable communication control between at least a first device and at least a second device of said plurality of devices.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said selectable communication control comprises restricting access between at least said first device and at least said second device.
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said circuitry is capable of designating at least one zone, said zone comprising a third device and fourth device, and wherein said selectable communication control comprises restricting access of at least said first device to at least said third and fourth device of said zone.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein selectable communication control comprises allocating bandwidth of at least one selected path between at least said first device and at least said second device.
5. (Original) A system comprising:
a plurality of devices capable of communicating in accordance with Serial Attached Small Computer Systems Interface (SAS) protocol;
circuitry to provide selectable communication control between at least a first device and at least a second device of said plurality of devices; and
said first device comprising a circuit card and a bus, said circuit card being capable of being coupled to said bus and said circuitry.

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6. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein said selectable communication control comprises restricting access between at least said first device and at least said second device.
7. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein said circuitry is capable of designating at least one zone, said zone comprising a third device and fourth device, and wherein said selectable communication control comprises restricting access of at least said first device to at least said third and fourth device of said zone.
8. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein said selectable communication control comprises allocating bandwidth of at least one selected path between at least said first device and at least said second device.
9. (Original) A method comprising:
designating a zone, said zone comprising at least a first device of a plurality of devices;
and
controlling communication between at least one other of said plurality of devices and said first device, said first device and said other device being capable of communicating in accordance with a Serial Attached Small Computer Systems Interface (SAS) protocol.
10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said controlling communication comprises restricting access of said other device to said first device in said zone.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said restricting access comprises restricting any communication between said first device and said other device.
12. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said other device is capable of reading data from said first device.
13. (Original) An apparatus comprising:

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a plurality of first ports capable of coupling a plurality of first devices together via an associated plurality of first communication links, said plurality of first devices being capable of communicating via a first communication protocol;

a plurality of second ports capable of coupling a plurality of second devices together via an associated plurality of second communication links, said plurality of second devices being capable of communicating via a second communication protocol; and

circuitry to provide selectable communication control between at least a first one of said plurality of first devices and a second one of said plurality of first devices.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said first communication protocol comprises a Serial Attached Small Computer Systems Interface (SAS) communication protocol; and said second communication protocol comprises a Serial Advanced Technology Attachment (S-ATA) communication protocol.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said selectable communication control comprises restricting access between at least said first one and said second one of said plurality of first devices.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said circuitry is capable of designating at least one zone, said zone comprising a third device and fourth device, and wherein said selectable communication control comprises restricting access of at least said one of said first plurality of devices to said third and fourth device of said zone.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said selectable communication control comprises allocating bandwidth of at least one selected path between at least said first one and said second one of said plurality of first devices.

18. (Currently amended) An article comprising:

a machine readable medium having stored thereon instructions that when executed by a machine result in the machine performing operations comprising:

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defining designating a zone, said zone comprising at least a first device of a plurality of devices; and

controlling communication between at least one other of said plurality of devices and said first device, said first device and said other device being capable of communicating in accordance with a Serial Attached Small Computer Systems Interface (SAS) protocol.

19. (Original) The article of claim 18, wherein said controlling communication comprises restricting access of said other device to said first device in said zone.

20. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein said restricting access comprises restricting any communication between said first device and said other device.

21. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein said other device is capable of reading data from said first device.

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